

PRINTED MEDICAL COMMENTARIES
AND AUTHENTICITY:
THE CASE OF *DE ALIMENTO*

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Abstract

In the first years of the sixteenth century the *De alimento*, an Hippocratic treatise on nutrition, was considered inauthentic and had virtually no role in university instruction or the commentary tradition. In the middle of the sixteenth century, three prominent physicians—Francisco Vallés, Antonio Fracanzano, and Girolamo Cardano—wrote commentaries on the *De alimento* in which they claimed that Hippocrates was the true author of this work. They based their claims on philological evidence, such as style, language, and citations from the Galenic corpus. Their philological judgments, however, were colored by their understanding of medicine. Because these three physicians supported the dietetic method presented in the *De alimento*, they deemed this treatise to be useful and worthy of Hippocrates, the supposed father of medicine. Thus their philological evidence was influenced by the practical concerns of medicine. As a result, during the late Renaissance the work was widely considered to be authentic.

The search to determine which works are the genuine works of Hippocrates, the so-called Hippocratic Question, goes back to the nineteenth century and Littré's edition of the *Hippocratic Corpus*, although we might say that it began in antiquity.¹ Since the writings attributed to Hippocrates represent the first large body of medical writing and were seen for centuries as a, if not the, prominent source for medical teachings, the identification of treatises as truly Hippocratic was of great interest to physicians as well as investigators into history. For example in antiquity, Galen, the preeminent medical authority of the second century A. D., routinely judged the authenticity of works in the *Hippocratic Corpus*. Moreover, sixteenth-century scholars and medical doctors, having gained a greatly expanded version of ancient medical writing questioned the authorship of various Hippocratic treatises.²

Attempts to define who the historical personage of Hippocrates was and what works constitute his writings continue today. Recent debates over the Hippocratic Question have been based on comparative philology. Thus, a number of studies try to match Plato's description of Hippocrates' method of considering the human body "not without the nature of the whole" to treatises that might have used that method.³ Other techniques have relied on dating the language and style of treatises in order to show that they must have been composed much later than during Hippocrates' lifetime.

While increased philological sophistication and a more detailed knowledge of Greek sources played a significant role in arguments about the authenticity of these works during the Renaissance, the techniques that sixteenth-century scholars used to answer the Hippocratic Question differed radically from those of contemporary philologists. Most notably the perceived utility of a given treatise for medical practice frequently contributed to the determination of authorship. While Renaissance commentators discussed the language and style of treatises, they often relied on the authority of Greek sources, or what they thought were Greek sources, as well as the worthiness of the content of the treatise for understanding medicine. The assessment of a work as useful could drastically affect how scholars described its origin. Genuineness conferred authority to a work, and conversely utility conferred genuineness.

We can see a ripe example of the influence of medical judgments on what we might think would be an historical and philological question in the *fortuna* of the Hippocratic treatise *De alimento* or *Peri trophes*.⁴ One of the achievements of humanism is its more precise consideration of authorship. Lorenzo Valla's assessment of the *Donation of Constantine* and Isaac Causabon's reevaluation of the authorship of the *Hermetic Corpus* are ripe examples of new considerations of the authenticity of ancient or not so ancient texts. Thus, it is customary to note the capability of advancing philological sophistication in debunking the supposed authorship of what were considered to be seminal texts.

In the case of the "De alimento," however, we find a rarity. An obscure text gained greater prominence simultaneously with a revised identification of its author, a revision that made the author the father of medicine. In the first printed editions of the *Hippocratic Corpus*, editors, using Galen's supposed testimony, claimed that Hippocrates did not write this "libellum." By the middle of the sixteenth century, three medical

commentaries on this work, the only three written in Latin in that century, all maintained that Hippocrates was the true author. These commentators, Francisco Vallés, Antonio Fracanzano, and Girolamo Cardano, three extremely prominent physicians of their time, used medical arguments to supplement more specifically textual readings to undermine what was thought to be Galen's authority. While these commentators showed the contradictory attitudes towards the authenticity of this work found in the Galenic corpus, they also valued the contents of the *De alimento*.

These positive evaluations of the utility of this work proved just as influential in reversing accepted opinion as did their reevaluation of Galen's supposed testimony. Their judgments influenced subsequent publishers and editors; the next generations of editions of the *Hippocratic Corpus* reversed their opinion on the matter, and the *De alimento* became part of the genuine works of Hippocrates. It is a commonplace that Renaissance humanism played a role in determining the agenda of natural philosophy and medicine through its demands of textual precision. In the case of the reception of the *De alimento* we see the reverse: perceived medical utility determined how people identified the author of a text.

The *De alimento* is a short treatise that, as its title indicates, discusses nutrition, the process of digestion, and the assimilation of food into the body. The book is composed of brief aphorisms, which as a quotation of Heraclitus suggests, were considered obscure. Recent assessments of its date of composition range from the fifth century B.C. to the first century A.D.⁵ As a result of its not being part of university curricula and the lack of availability, it was virtually unread during the Middle Ages and early Renaissance.⁶ Low levels of interest carried through the first half of the sixteenth century, when its place in the *Hippocratic Corpus* was questioned.

Early Renaissance editors and translators agreed that Hippocrates did not write the "De alimento." They based their judgment on a comment they falsely attributed to Galen and apparently reversed the opinion found in medieval Latin translations.⁷ That Galen wrote a lengthy commentary on "De alimento," described his commentary on the work in his treatise *On my own books*, and elsewhere quoted *De alimento* while citing Hippocrates as its author did not affect early reception.⁸ Galen's commentary is and was not extant during the early part of the sixteenth century, although sometime in the middle of that century, someone wrote it. The true author of this forgery is still unknown; Karl Deichgräber, writing in 1973, suspected the translator and doctor Giovanni Battista

Rasario. Rasario was skilled in the Greek language, and as a translator of Oribasius and other Hippocratic works appears to have been capable. He is the prime suspect for this fabrication because he is identified as the translator of the work in volumes published by Giunta Press in the 1570s.⁹ Identification of this work as a fake is based on the fact that it has no manuscript tradition. It is a skilled fake, nonetheless, and respects Greek chronology.¹⁰ And in a sense, we might consider this the fourth Renaissance commentary on the "De alimento," even though it is questionable what kind of evidence we can take from it, especially for questions about authenticity. Should one trust opinions about the authorship of other works in a work that itself is a fake? The fake had a large success, being in Chartier's 1639 edition and Kühn's of the 1820's.¹¹ But since [Ps.] Galen's commentary does not appear in the first large editions of his *Opera Omnia* such as those printed by the Aldine Press in 1525, Cratander in 1538, Froben in 1549, and the Giunta Latin translation of 1565,¹² it is not surprising that Vallés, Fracanzano, and Cardano were unaware of the pseudo-Galenic commentary.

Marco Fabio Calvo was responsible for the earliest printed Latin translation of Hippocrates' "De alimento," which came out in Rome in 1525 in an *Opera omnia*. His preface for this work consists of one sentence: "[A book] which Galen denies to belong to Hippocrates, and thinks that is of either Thessalius or Herophilus."¹³ This phrase was to become standard in early sixteenth-century editions and translations. It was, however, not in fact a quotation from Galen. Rather it derived from a scholium contained in the *Marcianus Graecus* 269, a manuscript that has been and continues to be a major source for Hippocratic works.¹⁴ The belief that this scholium stems from Galen was widespread as was faith in the accuracy of its identification of the author during the first decades of the sixteenth century. For example, the 1526 Aldine edition repeated it. Janus Cornarius expanded on this phrase in his still brief preface to the *Opera Omnia*, printed first in Basil in 1546 and again in Lyon in 1555, although he softened the blow of the determination of lack of authenticity by noting that although it is not by Hippocrates, "nevertheless he [Galen] did not say it was by some plebian or vulgar man."¹⁵

In sum, although it was agreed upon that this work was ancient, and its author undoubtedly had some merits, no one felt the need to question what was thought to be Galen's opinion that Hippocrates was not its author. The failure to investigate the accuracy of what were considered to be Galen's claims probably has as much to do with his authority as with

the general lack of interest in the "De alimento." To my knowledge, no one had written a commentary on it, and it was only infrequently if ever used in medical discussions or teachings before these later editions and translations.¹⁶

The status, both in terms of its authorship and relevance to medicine, of the *De alimento* abruptly changed in the 1560s. Francisco Vallés wrote the first printed commentary on this work in a volume that was published in 1561. Vallés was one of the most prominent Spanish physicians of the second half of the sixteenth century. He worked first as a professor at the Complutensis University in Alcalá and later as a personal physician to King Phillip II.¹⁷ His *Controversiarum Medicarum et Philosophicarum libri decem* was a frequently cited book in medical circles and went through ten editions, being printed throughout Europe. His commentary on the *De alimento* was the first printed of a series of Hippocratic commentaries, which included traditional titles such as the *Prognostics* (1567) and the *Aphorisms* and less commonly treated works such as *De ratione victus in morbis acutis* (1569) and *Epidemiorum libri* (1577).

Readership of the 1561 edition of Vallés' commentary appears to be slight. Neither Fracanzano nor Cardano referred to it in their commentaries. Nevertheless, the 1589 edition, printed in Cologne, most likely had more influence. Estevão Rodrigues Castro, the author of a 1635 commentary on the "De alimento," claimed that Fracanzano was the first to comment on this work, then Cardano, and Vallés third.¹⁸

As a result of the low levels of readership, it is questionable how much influence Vallés' 1561 commentary had in changing opinion about the authorship. Nevertheless his judgment of this work resonates with the later views of Fracanzano and Cardano. Vallés described the *De alimento* as being "most useful to many activities of the arts, and full of learning." Furthermore, "the worthiness of its conclusion and its style" led him to conclude that Hippocrates indeed wrote this work.¹⁹ Vallés, no mean linguist, was capable of judging Greek style; this commentary includes the Greek text and by 1561 he had already published a translation of Aristotle's *Meteorologica* IV. To what other Hippocratic works he was comparing the style of the *De alimento* is unclear, since none of his other commentaries have a similar preface that discusses authorship. He goes on to confess that even if it is not true that Hippocrates wrote this work, he does not care because "it is enough that it is so very worthy (*dignissimum*) of Hippocrates."²⁰ Thus, according to Vallés, the importance of the

content to the art of medicine recommends this treatise regardless who wrote it. Rightfully ignorant of Galen's commentary on this work, he considered himself as filling a gap in the Galenic corpus. He wrote:

Galen left this book without commentaries: for what reason I do not know; I do know, however, that he wrote commentaries on other books containing less fruitful teachings, and which he himself denied were by Hippocrates. It is for this reason that I have persuaded myself to apply myself to this commentary.²¹

Vallés, in his effort to imitate Galen, who was not overly concerned with authenticity, concludes that genuineness does not determine the worth of an ancient treatise.

Antonio Fracanzano's (1506-1567)²² *In librum Hippocratis de alimento commentarius* (1566) was his last work published during his lifetime. A professor of medicine at the Universities of Padua and Bologna, his most famous work was a short treatise on syphilis, in which he argues that the French disease is not a disease of the whole substance (*tota substantia*) but rather a set of accidents. This treatise was printed as an appendix to Gabriele Falloppia's *De morbo gallico*.²³

Fracanzano's preface to the *De alimento* addresses the traditional questions of the *accessus ad auctores*: title, authorship, the author's intent, the book's utility, and the division of the book into chapters. Authenticity was of greater concern to Fracanzano than it was to Vallés. He repeatedly added the epithet of "great" to the name of Hippocrates, intimating the importance that this ancient figure has had on the history of medicine. Having pointed out that learned people, philosophers, and physicians are barely capable of understanding this little known book, Fracanzano emphasized its utility. He decided to comment on this book because of its pertinence to the understanding of medicine. Despite its small size it is a repository for "all of the elements of the art of medicine"—this phrase he recommended for its title—and its brevity makes it ideal for memorizing these elements which "open up the entire field to one's eyes."²⁴ By describing this book as an outlaying of the elements of medicine, Fracanzano reveals what he thinks is primary to the study of medicine: "the benefits and detriments that arise from food."²⁵

While the worth of the contents of this work suggests that it belongs to the Great Hippocrates, its Heraclitean style suggests otherwise. Obscurity and brevity, Fracanzano notes are not the style of some works

such as *Prognostics* and *Regimen in acute diseases*, but nonetheless this book corresponds to something he taught, lecture notes (*commentarium*) not a book that was written for publication (*editionem*). Thus, among his writings, not meant for publication, the inventor of medicine often wrote "much obscurely, much without order, but nothing false."²⁶ As a result, he concluded that its style fits with Hippocrates.' The repeated concessions that this book does not fit with the general style of the corpus, however, suggest that this argument was presented more tenuously than the argument based on the value of the book's actual teachings.

Fracanzano's commentary greatly influenced the subsequent *fortuna* of *De alimento*. Cardano's commentary, while longer and more detailed, owes much to its predecessor. Although, apparently more familiar with Galen's genuine citations of this book than Fracanzano was, Cardano conceded the validity of Fracanzano's assessment of the authenticity of this work. He also agreed with the judgment that this book treats "the elements of the art of medicine," its purpose is to explain "the benefits and detriments that result from nourishment," and that Hippocrates "wrote much obscurely and without proper order, but nevertheless replete with truth."²⁷ The establishment of the elements allows physicians to proceed in their deductions just as Euclid's elements allow a geometer. Citing Galen's *On my own* books, Cardano made much more of the fact that Galen wrote four books of commentary on this book, suggesting that if he discussed this work in so much depth, he must have thought it was authentic. Apparently Vallés' belief that Galen was not much interested in discussions of authorship was not universally shared. One might link Cardano's interest in this work to his privileging of dietetics, in particular Hippocratic dietetics,²⁸ as the forefront of medicine. It is difficult to see this work as the primary source of "the elements of medicine" without conceding the centrality of diet and nutrition in the maintenance of health and the prevention of disease.

These commentaries also had a great impact on subsequent editions of the *Hippocratic Corpus*. After the 1560s no edition repeated the scholium from *Marcianus Graecus* 269, even though these commentaries had not exposed the source of that statement. Theodor Zwinger's 1579 *Opera omnia* that includes Cornarius' Latin translation accepted the *De alimento* as original, as does the 1575 Venetian Latin translation that nevertheless passed on the scholium masquerading as Galen.²⁹

More significance, however, is found in the work of Girolamo Mercuriale, Fracanzano's student and eventual successor at Padova, and associate of Alessandro Farnese, to whom Fracanzano was in service and dedicated his comments on the *De alimento*.³⁰ Mercuriale retained much of Fracanzano's thought about this work in his *Censura hippocratis*. Fracanzano was evidently close to Mercuriale and referred to him as his "praeceptor."³¹ The *Censura Hippocratis* was at the time the most detailed classification of the *Hippocratic Corpus* based on authorship and historical origins.

This work, which was originally printed in 1583 and accompanied a 1588 edition of the *Hippocratic Corpus*, divided the corpus into four classes, based on their proximity to Hippocrates. The first class contains those books by Hippocrates, including both writings intended for publication and those not intended for the public. The *De alimento* falls under this first class of most authentic works.³² Mercuriale was an avid antiquarian and opinionated about the historical circumstances that surrounded the original formation of the *Hippocratic Corpus*, claiming that scholars as far back as those working in the ancient library at Alexandria formulated the corpus.³³ The views of Fracanzano and Cardano, however, appear to have had much influence on him, as did his familiarity of the source manuscripts and the Galenic corpus. In his *Adnotationes in libro de Alimento* that accompanied the text in the 1588 edition of the *Hippocratic Corpus*, Mercuriale argued that Galen in fact thought this book was by Hippocrates. Evidence of Galen's views comes from the fact he wrote a commentary on it and that he cited it several times.³⁴ Mercuriale, presumably having noted the source of the scholium, concluded that the fact that some manuscripts attribute this work to authors besides Hippocrates is weak evidence compared to Galen's repeated citations.³⁵ Mercuriale was also familiar with Cardano's and Fracanzano's commentaries and noted their disagreements with those who argued for an author other than Hippocrates. Furthermore he shared their opinion regarding the worth of the material in this work. Its truth coupled with its style makes it worthy of Hippocrates. In words reminiscent of Vallés, Fracazano, and Cardano, Mercuriale stated that this book should be judged to be "truly worthy of Hippocrates," because of the "richness of its statements, the brevity of the exposition, the *gravitas* of the words, the coherence of its opinions, and the simultaneous obscurity of its phrasing."³⁶

The combined judgments of these scholars had much influence. Subsequent editions of the *Opera omnia* deferred to this opinion. For example, a 1596 edition printed in Frankfurt by Andreas Wechel not only recounted the arguments found in Cardano's and Fracanzano's work, but also cited Mercuriale's view as decisive to the assessment of genuineness. The *De alimento* became authentically worthy of Hippocrates, at least for a period in time.

NOTES

¹ For recent treatments of the Hippocratic Question, see: Wesley Smith, *The Hippocratic Tradition* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979); Jaap Mansfeld, "Plato and the method of Hippocrates," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* (21) 341-362; G. E. R. Lloyd, "The Hippocratic Question," in *Methods and Problems in Greek Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 194-223. For an overview of views on this question in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see: Ludwig Edelstein, "The Genuine Works of Hippocrates," in *Ancient Medicine* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967) 133-144.

² Vivian Nutton, "Hippocrates in the Renaissance," *Sudhoffs Archiv Beihefte* 27 (1989) 409-439.

³ *Phaedrus*, 269Eff.

⁴ For text see: *Hippocrate*, vol. 6, part 2, ed. and trans. Robert Joly (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1972) 129-155.

⁵ For a discussion on the various views of its date see: Karl Deichgräber, *Pseudhippokrates: Über die Nahrung* (Mainz: Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, 1973) 5-14; Robert Joly, "Remarques sur le *De Alimento* pseudo-hippocratique," in *Le monde grec: pensée, littérature, histoire, documents; hommages à Claire Préaux* (Brussels: Université libre de Bruxelles, 1979) 271-276.

⁶ The known medieval tradition on this work is extremely slight. See: Pearl Kibre, "Hippocrates Latinus: Repertorium of Hippocratic Writings in the Latin Middle Ages (VI)," *Traditio* 36 (1980) 369-370. She lists only five manuscripts of Latin translations of this work that date from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century and no commentaries.

⁷ For medieval citations of Hippocrates as its author, see: Kibre, "Hippocrates Latinus (VI)." For example, Paris BN 6865, f. 118r: "Incipit liber Ypocratis de nutrimento..."; Vienna 2328 [Rec. 948], a. 1314, fol. 33a: "Hipp. De nutrimento et nutribili."

⁸ Karl Gottlob Kühn, *Claudii Galeni opera omnia* (Leipzig, 1821-1833) vol. XIX, 36.

⁹ See Richard J. Durling, "A Chronological Census of Renaissance Editions and Translations of Galen," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 24 (1961) 280, 294. These volumes were those printed in 1576-77, 1586, and 1596-1597.

¹⁰ See: Joly, *Hippocrate*, 136-137.

¹¹ Karl Gottlob Kühn, XV; René Chartier, *Magni Coi Hippocratis et Claudii Galeni Pergameni Archatruon Universa Quae Extant Opera* (Paris, 1639) vol. 6, pp. 234-295. For possible fragments from a papyrus of the real commentary see: Daniela Manetti, "Tematica filosofica e scientifica nel papiro fiorentino 115: Un probabile frammento di Galeno *In Hippocratis De Alimento*," in *Studi su papiri greci di logica e medicina* (Florence: Olschki, 1985) 173-212.

¹² *Galenii librorum pars prim [-quinta]* (Venice: Aldus, 1525); *Galenii Pergameni...opera quae ad nos extant omnia* (Basel: Froben, 1549); *Galenii omnia quae extant opera* (Venice: Giunta, 1565).

¹³ *Hippocratis Coi medicorum omnium longe Principis, octoginta Volumina...* trans. Marco Fabio Calvo (Rome: Francisco Calvo, 1525) 203: "Quem Galenus Hippocratis esse negat, putatque vel Thessali vel Herophili esse."

¹⁴ For this scholium, see the apparatus in: J. L. Heiberg, ed., *Corpus medicorum graecorum* (Leipzig/Berlin, 1927) I.1, p. 79.

¹⁵ *Hippocratis Coi medicorum omnium longe principis, opera quae apud nos extant omnia*. Trans. Janus Cornarius (Lyon: Antonio Vincentio, 1555) 128: "Hunc librum Galenum Hippocratis esse negat. & id tamen non alicuius plebes ac vulgaris hominis esse dicit."

¹⁶ I have found no commentaries on this work written before 1561 listed in: Gilles Maloney and Raymond Savoie, *Cinq cent ans de bibliographie hippocratique: 1473-1982* (St-Jean-Chrysostome, Québec, Canada: Editions du Sphinx, 1982).

¹⁷ For Vallés' biography and works, see: Marcial Solana, *Historia de la filosofía española. Época del renacimiento*, vol. 2 (Madrid, 1941) 297-347.

¹⁸ Estavão Rodrigues Castro, *Commentarius in Hippocratis Coi libellum de alimento* (Florence: Sermatelli, 1635) 1-2.

¹⁹ Francisco Vallés, *In Aphorismos Hippocratis Commentarii VII. Praeterea Eiusdem Commentarii omnes* (Cologne, 1589) 213: "Est enim liber ad multa artis opera utilissimus, & eruditione refertissimus."

²⁰ *Ibid.*: "ego, ob sententiarum dignitatem, & stylum, Hippocratis esse censeo. Verum sive sit, sive secus, nihil curo: mihi satis sit, Hippocrate esse dignissimum."

²¹ *Ibid.*: "Hunc Galenus sine commentariis reliquit: quo consilio, nescio: scio tamen, eum commentaria scripsisse in alios libros minus continentes frugis, & quos Hippocratis esse, ipsemet negavit."

²² The spelling of "Fracanzano" is not uniform. It is also spelled as Fracanzani and Fracanzan.

²³ Gabriele Falloppia, *De morbo gallico* (Bologna, 1574).

²⁴ Antonio Fracanzano, *In librum Hippocratis de Alimento Commentarius* (Venice, 1566) 11: "Maxima vero est utilitas huius libri: hic enim videntur reposita omnia elementa artis medicae... Praestat autem elementaris doctrina, ut paucis verbis rem totam aperiat & ob oculos ponat: haec ad memoriam, ad reminiscentiam, ad redarguendas falsas sententias facit maxime."

²⁵ *Ibid.*, "Intentio autem Hippocratis in hoc libro est agere de commodis, & incommodis ex alimento provenientibus."

²⁶ *Item*, 10-11: "Hippocrates autem tanquam primus inventor multa quidem obscure scripsit, multa inordinate, falsa nulla."

²⁷ Girolamo Cardano, *In librum Hippocratis de alimento* (Bologna, 1568) 7: "utilitas autem huius libri, est elementa, & principia artis medicae constituere."

²⁸ For Cardano's interest in Hippocratic dietetics, see: Nancy G. Siraisi, *The Clock and the Mirror* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997) 71-90.

²⁹ Theodor Zwinger, *Hippocratis Coi Asclepiadeae genti sacrae coryphaei Viginti duo Commentarii tabuli illustrati...* (Basel: 1579) 309; *Hippocratis Coi medicorum omnium facile principis Opera* (Venice, 1575) 53r.

³⁰ Italo Paoletti, *Gerolamo Mercuriale e il suo tempo* (Lanciano: Cooperativa editoriale tipografica, 1963).

³¹ *Opera quae extant Graece et Latine* (Venice: Giunta, 1588) vol. 1, p. 357.

³² *Censura operum Hippocratis in Opera quae extant Graece et Latine* (Venice: Giunta, 1588) vol. 1, p. 4.

³³ Nancy G. Siraisi, "History, Antiquarianism, and Medicine: The Case of Girolamo Mercuriale," *Journal of the History of Ideas* (2003) 231-251.

³⁴ *Opera quae extant Graece et Latine* (Venice: Giunta, 1588) vol. 1, p. 356. Mercuriale noted that Galen cited the work in *De temp.* 3, *De fac. nat.* XI, and *De san. tue.* I.

³⁵ Ibid, "In aliquibus tamen antiquis manuscriptis codicibus invenitur ipsum esse tributum Philistioni vel Pherecydi, sed nec huiusmodi leve testimonium ququam adversus praedicta facit."

³⁶ *Censura operum Hippocratis*, vol. 1 p. 7 "Librum de alimento hic pariter collocandum non dubito, quem licet nonnulli auctori tribuant Philistioni, vel Pherecydi, ea tamen est in ipso sententiarum copia, sermonis brevitatis, verborum gravitas, dogmatum consonantia, simulque dictionis obscuritas, ut vere Hippocrate dignus a plerisque omnibus sit iudicatus, ac propterea."

MISLABELING, MISCALCULATING, AND MISUNDERSTANDING: THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY AND THE CHALLENGE OF INTELLIGENT DESIGN

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Abstract

Today many of the science classrooms in the United States are troubled; teachers are reluctant to teach what the curriculum requires; students are stressed between academic expectations and the religious commitments of family and church. The public media thrive on the controversy and the public discourse on the question of intelligent design is compromised by the deep "innocence" of the public both about science and about religion. If the scientific community is going to most constructively engage in the resolution of these issues, it will need to avoid better three errors that have tended to mark its response to the intelligent design movement: mislabeling, miscalculating, and misunderstanding.

Introduction

During the controversy over state public school science education standards in Kansas in the summer of 1999, advocates for so-called "intelligent design" (ID) first entered the public debate about teaching evolution in public classrooms. By 2002, when Ohio was adopting new standards for its public schools, ID advocates were the leading voices seeking to compromise mainstream science education. Today, local school boards all across the nation find themselves being encouraged internally and externally to adopt policies that, at the very least, permit ID to be taught as a "scientific" alternative to contemporary evolutionary theory.

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